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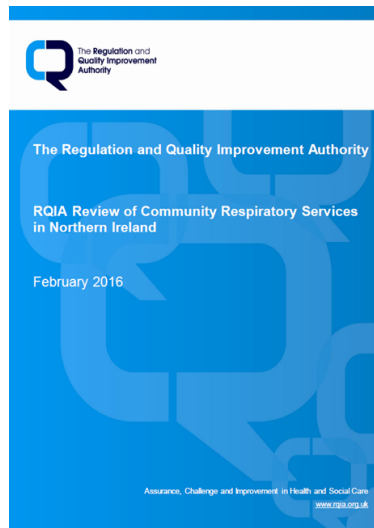
You can read the full report of our findings and recommendations for improvement on our website, or by clicking on the image of the report



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Our reviews are undertaken as part of RQIA's Three Year Review Programme. You can read more about the areas we are reviewing during 2015-18 by visiting our website or by clicking on this image.

Community Respiratory Services



Review of Community Respiratory Services in Northern Ireland, February 2016

As part of RQIA's Three Year Review Programme 2012-15, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety commissioned RQIA to undertake a review of the community respiratory services. The review team reviewed the trusts' structures, teams and services, for example, pulmonary rehabilitation and home oxygen services.

RQIA's review team found a committed community respiratory services workforce, providing a patient-centred service for those with long-term respiratory conditions across Northern Ireland, a view endorsed by those using the services.

The review team highlighted gaps in specialist areas for people with particular conditions - and noted the need for a combined regional and local approach to address these.

To improve the quality of these services for Northern Ireland patients, RQIA's review makes 13 key recommendations for the HSC Board and all trusts, and a further 17 supporting recommendations for the HSC Board and individual trusts

Methodology

- RQIA held meetings with each HSC trust, to gain an overview of their community respiratory services teams and structures, including the services they provide in people's own homes.
- HSC trusts completed a baseline questionnaire to provide further information on their community respiratory services.
- The review team met with frontline staff from community respiratory teams and the trusts' senior management.
- Service users were asked for their views of the community respiratory service in their area. Interviews were conducted with members of the Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke groups and the British Lung Foundation's Breathe Easy groups.
- Information on the structures, commissioning and services' links with primary care were sought from:
 - GPs
 - HSC Board as commissioner of services
 - Regional respiratory lead at the Public Health Agency
 - Long Term Condition Alliance Northern Ireland
- A report of the review team's findings and recommendations is also available on RQIA's website, www.rqia.org.uk.

Findings

The review team found:

- There is a committed community respiratory services workforce, who provide a patient-centred service for those with long-term respiratory conditions across Northern Ireland.
- Funding for community respiratory services can be short-term and non-recurring, making it difficult to recruit and retain staff. The review team also considered that the availability of out-of-hours services should be extended.
- There is a need for equal service provision for every patient across Northern Ireland, and for stronger integration across primary, community and acute services - from prevention to palliative and end-of-life care.
- Service users spoke highly about the staff, and the community respiratory services they have received. They were well informed about how and when they could contact community respiratory services. However, they called for better information and signposting on what services were available.